



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

reached in time. It has a positive dictum, a great experimental deliverance, in answer to the previous question; yet it utters this dictum modestly, in a world where science as well as religion has a right to speak, and where the last word has not been said in either. Thus the task of theological education seems vastly greater than when it was supposedly limited to training in the exegesis of texts and the exposition of finished systems. The text seems more luminous, as being a deposit of real life; but the system seems less com-

PELLING, as being the experimental formulation of a growing faith in individual and community.

After all, the fundamental thing is an experience of the living God as the God of redemption, into fellowship with whose active life of loving and saving service humanity must be brought. And that fundamental fact becomes dynamic and experimental through Jesus; still, as of old, men come to God through him. And it was he who, in an age of rabbinism, taught us to raise the previous question.

THE LITERARY SOURCES AND HISTORICAL IMPLICATIONS OF EPHESIANS

A. J. DICKINSON, D.D.
Birmingham, Alabama

The more we study Paul the more we see that Paulinism is the application of the gospel to human affairs. The letters of the apostles are not studied productions but are born of actual situations. Any attempt to make these letters more vivid and real is to be welcomed. Dr. Dickinson gives us an unconventional treatment and one that is sure to make men appreciate more fully the apostles' work.

I have been asked by several of the readers of the article on Galatians in the March (1913) number of the *Biblical World* to apply to the phenomena of a similar nature discoverable in Ephesians the same point of view, working hypothesis, and method of treatment therein followed. That point of view is that the writing was first in the forms of life, being occasional letters in a more or less extended correspondence; the working hypothesis is that in passing from the forms of life into the *genre* of literature,

which it now possesses, there is involved a literary process, by which a group of the products of nature have been transformed into a work of literary art; the method employed is that currently known as literary and historical criticism. Our conclusion in the study of Galatians was that the epistle, as we have it, grew out of three previous occasional letters in a correspondence, which the apostle himself subsequently epistolized for service in the churches to promote the culture of the messianic life through

public reading. Thus the products of messianic life were transformed into a tool for messianic culture.

In approaching Ephesians from this point of view we notice that it is headed by what may be either the salutation of a letter or the dedication of a book (1:1-2), which has come down to us in three forms, according as we read "in Ephesus," or "in Laodicea," or omit the place. All three of these readings come from the first century of Christian literature; and it is impossible to decide with confidence which was the original upon the evidence of the MSS, or to account for the rise of the several variants on external evidence. If the epistle is composite, epistolized from sources written for definite and specific situations, it is a matter of the first importance to decide whether this passage is a salutation to a letter to Ephesus or to Laodicea or to both, or is the dedication to the book in its epistolized form. But this we cannot hope to do until we have studied the body of the writing.

A Jewish-Gentile Christian Irenicon

(1:3-14; 1:17-2:22; 3:20-21)

The epistle proper opens with a benedictus (1:3 ff.) in a rhapsodic, rhythmic, prophetic style, reminding one of the masterpieces of Old Testament prophecy. The authorship is plural, betraying everywhere the conscious experience of Jewish Christians exulting in their spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Messiah to God the Father of their Lord Jesus Messiah. They have come into these spiritual blessings in Messiah in fulfilment of God's messianic purpose and mystery of his will, where the phrases "election unto holiness," "fore-

ordination unto adoption," "redemption and forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace," "making known the mystery of his will," "dispensation of the fulness of times," "foreordained as a heritage," "before hoped in Messiah," etc., are to be taken in that content of meaning which they had among Christian Jews as the peculiar people of God in the first century A.D. and not as they have been given meaning in Augustinian and Calvinistic theology since. These Jewish-Christian authors express their exultations to God in the presence of their gentile Christian brethren who have come into the enjoyment of the same blessings, but in a different way; for they had gotten theirs by hearing the word of truth, the gospel of salvation, and by believing on Messiah (1:13). So these blessings in Messiah are to the Jewish authors "an earnest," a first payment in the messianic redemption; whereas to the gentile readers they are but "a seal" to the messianic covenant (1:13-14). In this passage (1:3-14), Christian Jews are writing to Christian Gentiles about their common salvation in Messiah.

But in 1:15-16 the authorship changes with the words "I also," and there is but a single writer; the style changes to the well-known personal-letter style of the apostle Paul, and the subject-matter to that of a concrete, definite, personal experience of an individual listening, praying, and making mention in prayers—a bit of private life. The use of the particle "also" shows that the writer regards himself as another and an additional person from those who have been hitherto writing; and if it excludes him from the group of those writing in 1:3-14,

its effect is to give his independent personal indorsement of what they did write. It may be that because the apostle was well known as the missionary to the Gentiles he was not a party to this exclusively Jewish-Christian writing, but added his indorsement independently to it by this interpolation, for the passage clearly is an interpolation.

In 1:17 the authorship is again plural; the style rhapsodic, rhythmic, prophetic; the subject-matter that of Jewish-Christian experience. The paragraph which follows (1:17—2:10) is a prayer offered by the writers for the readers in view of their common messianic heritage. It opens with the final particle *hina*, making the content of the prayer express its purpose. The purpose of the prayer is that the God of the Lord Jesus Messiah, the Father of glory, may edify, educate, and enlighten the readers that they may appreciate the messianic hope, the riches of the glory of the messianic inheritance in the saints, and the exceeding greatness of the messianic power in his dealings toward the Jewish-Christian authors (1:17-19a). This messianic power is displayed in the resurrection, heavenly session, and universal rule of Messiah for his church, his body, his fulness (1:19b-23); and the quickening and raising up and making to share the heavenly prerogatives by both Jewish and gentile Christians, though their former estate was one of deadness in sins, are a display of the exceeding riches of God's grace in kindness in Messiah Jesus for the benefit of coming ages, showing what God prepared to do in Messiah Jesus (2:1-10). So it follows that there can be no distinction between Jew and Gentile in

Messiah, wherein both are made new and one in messianic blessings (2:11-22).

We do not meet again with this plural authorship, rhapsodic, rhythmic, prophetic style and Jewish-Christian perspective except in 3:20-21. Here we have a doxology which is a fitting close to the document. If now the reader will examine 1:3-14; 1:17—2:22; 3:20-21, he will observe that throughout the authorship is the same, the readers the same, the style the same, the subject-matter homogeneous, the flow of thought even and in good sequence, and the writing complete in itself. This argues that it originally formed a separate and independent document before it came into its present context. It is, when thus considered, an irenicon from Jewish Christians to the gentile Christians, welcoming them to perfect equality and full fellowship in all the rights and privileges of the messianic kingdom. Its character and historical meaning we will discuss later; but suffice it now to point it out as one of the sources of the epistle.

An Apostolic Wisdom-Epistle

(3:1-19; 4:1—6:24)

The rest of the epistle (3:1-19; 4:1—6:24) has a single authorship, is in Paul's well-known letter style, and the writer is expressly affirmed to be "Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus," and every reference to the author's experience is to the life of Paul. No writing in the New Testament betrays its Pauline authorship more distinctly than this; and those who hold to the Pauline authorship of the entire epistle draw their data for that opinion mainly from this portion of it, while those denying the epistle to that apostle draw their evidence from the

irenicon as defined above. Both seem to be correct. The sameness of authorship, style, readers, the good sequence of thought and homogeneity of contents, the similarity of situation in the perspective shows that the whole was originally a separate document complete in itself and independent of its present context. It is a wisdom-letter to gentile Christians in some group of churches which Tychicus had been sent to visit and for whose special benefit the apostle had been given a "dispensation of the grace of God." Its purpose is to teach them how "to walk worthy of the messianic calling wherewith they were called."

The wisdom-letter opens with a grammatical torso, a sentence without a predicate: "For the sake of this I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus in behalf of you Gentiles." Did the apostle suffer a lapse in his mental process before he got to his predicate; and did he revert to his line of thought in 3:14 below? Or did he expect the readers to consider the phrase, "Paul the prisoner of Christ Jesus in behalf of you Gentiles," as a well-known appellation or title by which he was currently known among them, and conceiving of the title as a predicate noun did he expect them to so construe it with the proper person and number of the verb "to be"? Or is the whole passage only the caption of a writing beginning here, wherein it was customary to omit the word "write"; and so should we read "For this cause do I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus, *write* in behalf of you Gentiles"? The first suggests a mental instability in the apostle's thought-processes not warranted from what we know of him in

that regard elsewhere; the second is a literary resort entailing such inconsiderate mental strain on his readers that it is utterly unlike him; the third involves the validity of the theory of the genesis of the epistle we are now discussing, and may well be held in abeyance until our study is finished. But the validity of this last interpretation we assume for the time being; and the words will be the caption of a separate and new writing beginning here. (For analogous cases of such captions in letters omitting the word "write," see Acts 15:23; 23:26.) As a caption, this torso implies that the apostle has in mind to write in the interest of the gentile readers, and to give the occasion for his doing so; the occasion for the writing will be found in 3:2-19, and the writing itself in 4:1-6:24.

The occasion for his writing to these gentile Christians whom Tychicus is to visit (probably the churches of Asia) is because he has received a "dispensation of the grace of God" for them. He doubts whether the readers have as yet heard of this "dispensation"; and so he proposes to tell them about it. Now it is clear that he means something different here from his apostleship to the gentile heathen in the pioneer mission work hitherto engaging him; for of this the readers, whether Ephesians or Asian Christians generally, could not be ignorant after his work from Ephesus in 52-56 A.D.; nor is the dispensation, here had in mind, one for the gentile heathen world, but one for that portion of gentile christendom to which he is writing. The word (*oikonomia*), translated "dispensation" or "administration" or "stewardship," implies an

organized, well-defined work, to be administered in behalf of known beneficiaries; and the word "grace," as here used, bears the implications of a gratuity to be administered. The apostle is not writing in generalities and colorless abstractions; but he has in mind practical projects of a concrete nature capable of being effected. What this "dispensation" is in 3:2, he will set forth in 3:8-12 below; but, before doing so, he tells them why it was given specially to him in trust (3:3-7). The particle *hoti* which opens 3:3 is causal and not objective, as in our translations; and so we ought to read, "If indeed ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given unto me to youward, *because* by an apocalypse was made known to me the mystery," etc.; and 3:3-7 is the cause for what is reported in 3:2. There are involved in this passage (3:3-7) three things of importance in this connection: the apocalypse revealing the mystery, the mystery thus revealed, and the ministry growing out of it. The passage 3:3-4 deals specially with the apocalypse, 3:5-6 tells what is the mystery, and 3:7 states how the ministry followed; and all three of these were considerations why the "dispensation" has been given to him specially toward the gentile Christians whom he is addressing. About the apocalypse, he says he has written before "in a few words"; that this previous writing is within the reach of his readers; and that reading it they can perceive his understanding (*sunesis*, "coming into knowledge") in the mystery of Messiah. What is this previous writing in which he has written a "few words" about this apocalypse? He

had written II Cor., chaps. 10-13, about five years before, in 56 A.D., from Ephesus; and in it (12:1 ff.) are a few words about an important apocalypse, wherein he heard words not to be spoken and hence conveying a "mystery." This passage answers to every demand of the reference here; and so may well be the writing and the few words here had in mind. The mystery, revealed in that apocalyptic experience, had not before then been made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed (*apocalyphthe*) unto Messiah's holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit (3:5); and is "that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, and fellow members-of-the-body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Messiah Jesus through the gospel." These are the "unspeakable words, not lawful for a man to utter" (II Cor. 12:4), which the apostle heard when he was caught up in the apocalyptic ecstasy into Paradise. After receiving these "exceedingly great revelations" (II Cor. 12:7), Paul became a minister of them according to the gift of that *grace* of God which was given him, according to the working of his *power* (II Cor. 12:9-10). One can in the language of Eph. 3:7 hear the echoes of the oracle in II Cor. 12:9; just as in II Cor. 12:4 he can hear echoes of the oracle in Eph. 3:6. When the two passages are read together they are clearly duplicate narratives of the same events, the one emphasizing the apocalyptic ecstasy, the other the mystery revealed. When he wrote the passage in Corinthians the apocalypse had occurred some fourteen years before (43 A.D.), which was the time when Barnabas had fetched him from Tarsus to take charge of the new

gentile church at Antioch (Acts 11:25 ff.), a peculiarly fit situation for such a revelation as Eph. 3:6 in such apocalyptic fashion as is described in II Cor. 12:2 ff. This apocalypse is further mentioned with incidents and gospel growing out of it in Gal. 1:12 and Gal. 2:2. (Compare with the last reference Paul's preaching in Galatia in Acts, chaps. 13-14, especially 13:46 ff.) These passages in Galatians throw light on Eph. 3:7 in showing that Paul's apostleship to the Gentiles grew out of this apocalypse, and how that came about with the approval of the "pillars," and was effected in his preaching. But it is clear that his apostleship, received and entered upon at that time, had in view pioneer mission work, laying a foundation where Christ was not named and planting for others to water. Now after twenty years of pioneer mission work among the Gentiles, because of the way in which that work came to him, he is assigned another "dispensation of the grace of God" among the gentile Christians of Asia and adjacent provinces, which has been so recent that possibly they have not as yet heard about it (3:2).

What this dispensation is he sets forth in 3:8-12. It is not the work upon which he entered after the apocalypse twenty years before, that of preaching Jesus as the Messiah to win converts to him; but to preach the "*unsearchable* riches of Messiah" to those already converted to him; to proclaim the content and worth of the messianic religion, surpassing human power to search out, to those who believe in it as a way of life; to make those already Christians to appreciate the more what they

have in Jesus as the Messiah; to deepen, broaden, and enlarge their messianic experience and usefulness. Thus he would make all men see what is "the dispensation" (the kingdom of God, as an organized service for man) of the mystery (God's messianic purpose), which for ages has been hid in God, the creator; with the purpose in view of now making known to principalities and powers in the heavenlies (the cults and hierarchies which held sway over the Greco-Roman world) through an edified and educated and trained church the manifold wisdom of God as purposed in Jesus Messiah and Lord, as through faith he gives his believers boldness and confidence in access to God (3:8-12). There is here implied a great missionary scheme to convert the world through bringing those already converted to such appreciation of the worth of the messianic religion that they could live it out winsomely before their heathen neighbors, and thus they would become exponents of Messiah wherever they were. It is a work of education, edification, discipline of believers to live out the gospel before the world and thus win the world. This is his new "dispensation of the grace of God" which he has just received for his gentile readers. This dispensation is clearly that part of missionary work enjoined in the last section of the commission in Matt. 28:20; whereas the previous apostleship received for them some twenty years before through the apocalypse is the work set forth in the first part of the same commission (Matt. 28:19). This dispensation ought to counteract any tendency toward growing faint on the part of his readers because of his

"tribulation"; for it turns that situation into one of glory for them (3:13).

Then follows his prayer for them as the beneficiaries of this new work of edification, education, and training. It is an exquisite prayer, all the more winsome and overwhelming when we remember it is the petition of a trustee of a "dispensation of the grace of God" for the beneficiaries of that grace. All through it breathes the soul of the teacher of "the unsearchable riches of Messiah" for the disciples of his Lord, whose growth is committed to him in trust. It is a prayer that his own wards in Messiah may receive messianic attainments and achievements "along with all saints" (3:14-19). Then comes the main body of the letter which he had in mind to write in behalf of the gentile Christians for whose benefit he had received the new dispensation. But little comment is needed for the purposes of this article; though from other and more practical and more important points of view it is the richest part of the epistle. It is in literary style an epistle, but its thought is cast in the forms of wisdom-writing. Hence it may well be called a wisdom-epistle; and its purpose is to impart wisdom for walking in the messianic way worthily of the messianic calling wherewith the readers had been called. He urges them to walk worthy of such a high calling in the several spheres of life: (1) as members of the messianic body (4:1-16); (2) in their social converse with their heathen gentile neighbors (4:17-32); (3) as children of God enjoying his love and light (5:1-21); (4) in the several domestic relations of life (5:22-6:9); (5) as soldiers of Messiah always ready for service and praying for the success

of all his soldiers, especially his "ambassador in bonds" (6:10-20). The epistle closes with a commendation of Tychicus and his mission, and salutation and benediction (6:21-24).

Some Problems in the Epistolization of the Sources

The irenicon (1:3-14; 1:17-2:22; 3:20-21) and the wisdom-epistle (3:1-19; 4:1-6:24), constituting the sources of the epistle in its canonical form, seem to have been preserved in the process of epistolization in their primitive integrity and completeness; but here and there is to be seen the work of the epistolizer, which may be studied to discover the nature of that process in this case.

1. The dedication (1:1-2), in the three forms which have come down to us in the variants of the text, can best be explained by supposing that a copy of the irenicon and the wisdom-epistle were sent to all the churches of Asia, including Ephesus and Laodicea, as separate documents; and that the two were compiled both in Ephesus and in Laodicea, and that so copies got into circulation with these variants in the dedication. Elsewhere in Asia churches receiving copies of each, knowing that the irenicon was intended for a much larger circle of churches than those in Asia, and that the wisdom-epistle was a circular letter for the churches Tychicus had been sent to visit, made copies without any limitation of place in the dedication; and hence originated the reading without either the words "in Ephesus" or "in Laodicea." The variants can be easily accounted for if they are supposed to have originated with the work of epistolization when the

dedication was composed for the published epistle.

2. The interpolation (1:15-16) was written into the irenicon by the apostle as he made, or had made, the copies, or copy, of it which he intended should be sent to the several churches Tychicus was to visit; and his reason for doing so was to give to it his independent and express indorsement. In adding it to the document he would have to make in the grammatical and literary structure of the sentences some incongruous changes in the context, and such may here be observed; but he would preserve as fully as possible the thought and context of the original, which is also patent here to the critical student.

3. In the process of epistolization the first part of the wisdom-epistle which gives the apostle's reason for writing it has been dovetailed into the irenicon between its main body and its concluding doxology. The reason for this may be found in the fact that because its subject, the recent dispensation of the grace of God given to the apostle, had originated as an afterbirth from the convention which issued the irenicon and resolved upon the change in missionary policy and the new assignment of work; and so what the apostle had to say about it found appropriate place just here.

4. It is very apparent that the wisdom-epistle is predicated upon and occasioned by the irenicon; and was intended to be to it an accompanying writing which Tychicus was to further supplement with his oral message. Possibly a copy of the irenicon was sent to Philippi; and Phil. 3:1b, "To write the same things for you, to me indeed is not irksome, but for you it is safe," is the opening sentence of another accom-

panying letter (Phil. 3:1b-4:7). In this event the apostle means that he has sent them a copy of "the same things" sent other gentile churches; and copied it off himself, because he thought it was safe for them to have a copy. The irenicon would well suggest to him the arraignment of the concision that follows. It may be that the letter "from Laodicea" in Col. 4:16 is this irenicon; but I am inclined to the opinion that that letter is now a part of the Epistle to the Colossians.

5. The passage, Eph. 4:9-10, dealing with the "descensus" is an interpolation; and is an intrusion into the context so patent that it casts suspicion on its genuineness. It is in this respect so much like the similar passages in I Pet. 3:19-22 and 4:6 that one can but suspect for them a close kinship and origin.

6. Ephesians and I Peter are in so many ways analogous it is necessary to attribute them to agencies which must have been common to some extent. The irenicon is closely akin to I Pet. 1:3-2:10; and the wisdom-epistle somewhat akin to I Pet. 2:11-4:11. Was Peter in Rome when the irenicon was drafted? Were he and Silas two of the representative Jewish-Christian authors of it? Did Peter also get a "dispensation of the grace of God" in the new missionary policy and assignment of work? If so, was it to the Hellenistic Jews of Asia, "the sojourners of the Dispersion," to whom he wrote this epistle or the letters from which it was epistolized? There are many questions that spring out of this view of the situation which we cannot now even mention, for this article is already too long.